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Digital Academy I

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English 10 Wiki Page Assignment

I greatly enjoyed Digital Academy I. Abby Thaker always had a well-planned lesson that included ideas for classroom application. Prior to this class, blogs, websites, and wiki pages were for the new hip teachers. I envied their computer knowledge. I couldn’t image how I would begin to teach myself how to navigate the world of technology in the classroom. Now I’m a teacher with a website and a blog for all of my classes! I connect my laptop to the projector and share author interviews, podcasts, and literary review clips. I put links to author web pages and include video clips on my class blogs. I organize my information using Diigo and share it with my peers. Digital Academy has opened a door for me as a teacher that I was afraid to open by myself. One new assignment that I implemented this year was a small-group wiki page. I found this assignment particularly rewarding for the students because it allowed for group collaboration from home, sharing of finished work, and encouraged literary internet searches.

Upon completing of the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird,* students were to choose a group theme they felt was present in the novel*.* Next they were to find three children’s books with the same present theme. They were to read the children’s books, make a group decision to choose the best three that fit with their theme, and complete the following requirements for each book on their group wiki page.

1. Give the book title, author, and include a picture of the cover.
2. Write a plot summary for the book.
3. Identify a minimum of two literary devices used in the book and explain how these devices were effective.

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1. Describe how the theme was shown in the book.
2. Explain the connections to *To Kill a Mockingbird* as well as the relevance or insight gained from the connections.

Time is always a constraint in the classroom. By using the wiki page I only needed to give two class periods for the groups to choose a theme and find their relevant children’s books. They were each given the wiki page address as well a password. They could access the assignment from home and complete, edit, make changes, and polish their finished copy. They were all able to contribute to the assignment outside of the classroom. I was also able to see who was working and when with *pbworks*. I found the site very teacher friendly.

Once the wiki pages were completed the students could share their work with the other groups. All of the pages were on the site for the students to read. Instead of hanging student work on the wall, it was available on the wiki page. I encouraged them to look at the other group wikis and provide feedback in class.

Another aspect of the assignment I found valuable was using the internet to search for children’s books and reading them online. One site, *Children’s Books Online,* was particularly helpful because the students could read the books together and make their choices regarding their theme. Some students had childhood favorites that they brought in, but most of them located online reading sites.

Overall I think the lesson was a success. The students proved their knowledge of theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They also demonstrated recognition of the theme in the children’s books. They identified literary elements present in the books they chose. They used the internet to find their

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sources. They worked well in their groups, utilizing the wiki page and the freedom it gave them to collaborate from home. Then finally, they used the wikis to share their work with their classmates.